



Annual Report 2022

General Information

Name of Agency:	Start Early
Program Number:	
Program Name:	Educare Chicago
Address:	5044 S. Wabash Avenue
Phone Number:	773-924-2334
Fax Number:	773-285-9749
Head Start Director Name:	Danielle D. Jordan
Head Start Director Email:	djordan@startearly.org
Agency Web Site Address:	www.educarechicago.org
Agency Type:	Licensed Early Childhood Program

Agency Description

Educare Chicago is a birth-to-age 5 early childhood program on Chicago’s South Side. Founded in 2000 by Start Early, this state-of-the-art school serves low-income infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. By providing research-based, high-quality Early/Head Start services to young children and their families, Educare helps break the cycle of unequal access to resources and historic under-investment. Educare Chicago also serves as a model for learning and innovation in the early learning and care field nationwide.

Site Locations

5044 S. Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60615

Community Areas Served

Educare Chicago is located on the South Side of Chicago. The families we serve generally live in the neighborhoods surrounding the school. These areas include Fuller Park, Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, Oakland, Washington Park and New City.

Head Start Program Overview

FY 2022 and Actual Expenditures		
	Budget	Actual
Sub-Recipient	\$0	\$0
Personnel	\$5,111,975	\$4,555,752
Fringe benefits	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$703,238	\$400,884
Other	\$1,435,464	\$1,537,395
Supplies	\$57,904	\$353,686
Travel	\$53,142	\$7,941
Equipment	\$0	\$0
Facilities/Construction	\$345,696	\$682,908

Financials | Funding Year 2022

- Total Funds: \$7,707,420

SOURCE AMMOUNT

- **Federal:** \$5,750,160
- **State:** \$462,914
- **Local District:** \$1,157,400
- **Private:** \$157,735
- **In-Kind:** \$8,000
- **Other:** \$171,210

Our Children & Families

Below represents number of Children Served in 2021-2022

	Funded Enrollment HS	Number of Children Served in HS	Funded Enrollment EHS	Number of Children Served in EHS
Center-based Child Care	81	75	64	60
Home-based Child Care	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Family Child Care	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total:	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Enrollment Statistics

Highest Level of Education by Family	Percent
Advanced/Bachelors	7.5%
Associate/Vocational/Some College	35%
High School Graduate/GED	50%
Less than High School Graduate	7.5%
Did not answer	0%

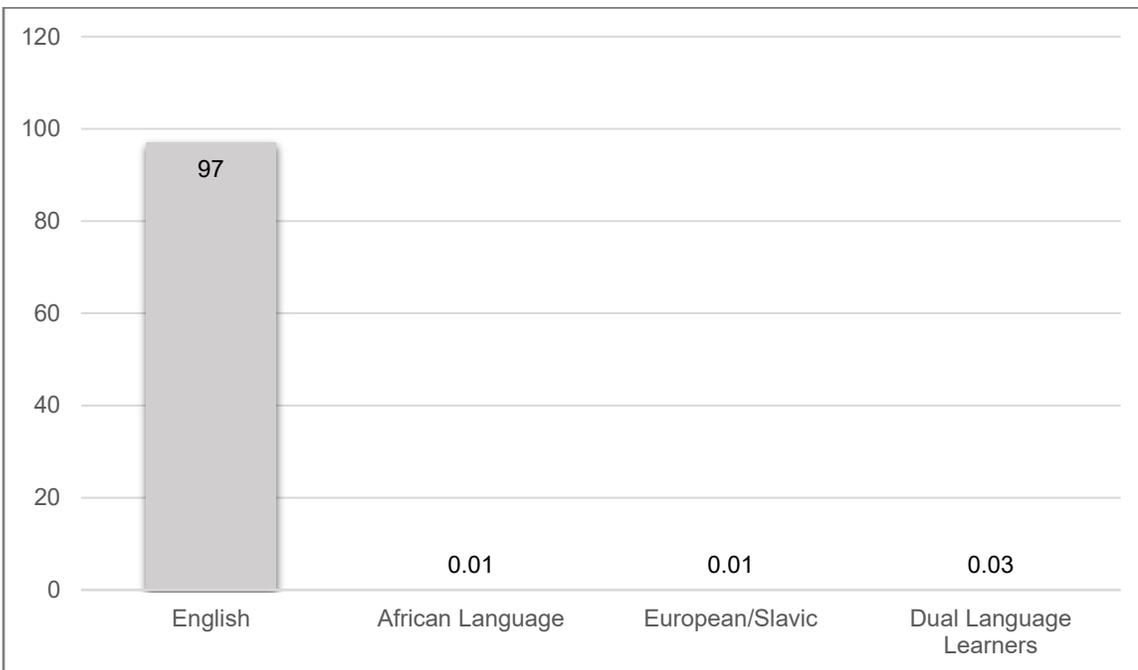
Race / Ethnicity of Participants

Race/Ethnicity of Participants	Percent
Hispanic of any race	0%
Other	1%
Black or African American	94%
Asian	0%
White	0%
Multiracial/Biracial	5%

Age of Children/Pregnant People

Ages/Pregnant People Served	Percent
4 years old	19%
3 years old	32%
2 years old	29%
1 year old	13%
Less than 1 year old	7%
Pregnant People	0%

Languages Spoken by Head Start Families



Preparing Children for Kindergarten

Teacher Level of Education	Percent
Master's Degree	47%
Bachelor's Degree	26%
Associate's Degree	26%
Child Development Associate	(2) also have A.A. Degrees
Home Visitor Credential	0%

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

SUMMARY OF CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Start Early's Early/Head Start Network completed Educare Chicago's annual Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations in every Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) classroom. The CLASS observations gave us valuable data indicative of teaching practices, including quality teacher-child interactions, and classroom measures and outcomes.

This year, we operated seven EHS and four HS fully operated classrooms. According to the Toddler CLASS scores, 4 of 7 classrooms observed scored high in Emotional Behavior Support and 3 of 7 scored in the mid-range. In Engaged Support for Learning, all seven classrooms scored in the mid-range.

With our preschool CLASS scores, all four HS classrooms observed scored high in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. In Instructional Support, all four HS classrooms scored in the mid-range. Our teaching teams need additional support in two areas: for EHS, Engaged Support for Learning; and for HS, Instructional Support.

Teachers demonstrated positive child/teacher interactions, while providing an environment that yielded a positive social emotional climate as measured by CLASS. Educare Chicago's preschool classrooms received an average score of 6.3 out of 7 on the Emotional Support Domain. This domain looks at the classroom's climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspective. Educare Chicago's scores exceeded the national average in this domain (National Average is 6 out of 7). As mentioned previously, Educare Chicago's preschool classrooms scored 6.3 out of 7 on the Social Emotional Support Domain, while also scoring a 6.1 out of 7 on the Classroom Organization Domain and 3.8 out of 7 on the Instructional Support Domain. The national average on the instructional support domain is 3 out of 7.

Although Educare Chicago's scores were great overall, we have identified areas of strength, areas for potential growth and subsequent strategies for further development. As a part of this strategy, the education coordinator met with each teaching team member, discussed these findings and developed a professional development goal related to CLASS that will be implemented in the 2022-2023 school year. Next school year, the education coordinator will utilize Teachstone and the NCQTL In-Service Suites to provide ongoing support to teaching staff.

Family Engagement

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES PROVIDED FOR FAMILIES

Family Engagement in Educare schools is defined as partnering with families in collaborative and reciprocal ways, building mutually respectful, goal-oriented relationships that support strong parent-child relationships, family well-being and ongoing learning and development of both the parent and child. To achieve positive outcomes, Educare's intensive family engagement approach is based on the principle that practitioners can only address a child's needs through the interdisciplinary work within the context of the entire family. As a part of this practice, Educare is committed to supporting parents in their role as their child's first and primary educator. Throughout 2021-2022, staff conducted 34 events to enhance the parent-child relationship and encourage learning in the home. Below are some highlights and examples of the conducted events.

PARENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS, HOME VISITS, PARENT CONFERENCES & MONTHLY VIRTUAL MEETING GROUPS

Out of an abundance of caution due to the ongoing pandemic, Educare has continued offering virtual family engagement events, while also opening in-person events for families/parents with proof of vaccination. An example of our hybrid approach is our Parent Committee Meetings.

Throughout the past school year, Educare continued providing two home visits and two parent conferences for all families per year. 217 home visits and 160 parent conferences were conducted throughout the school year.

Heading into the new school year, the Family Support Team will continue offering our monthly virtual meeting groups. These groups consist of the following engagement opportunities:

- Parent Committee Meeting
- Parent University
- Male Involvement Group
- Mom's Support Group

FALL FESTIVAL

Educare held a Fall Fest in 2021 for recruitment and enrollment efforts, while also creating an exciting event for currently enrolled families. Activities included on-the-spot eligibility determinations, a petting zoo, games and activities. The event also featured job placement opportunities through community organizations that shared their agency information with both current and prospective families.

PARENT STORE

As a response to supply chain issues, formula shortages and the increased financial hardships created by the pandemic, Educare's Family Support Services team (FSS) created a free school store as a means of offering household/family necessities to our families in an inviting/accessible setting. The team also devised an equitable system for collecting the items. Families are allowed one visit per month, where they can select three items from the store that they may want or need. Additionally, the team created an incentive program for parent engagement. If a parent attends a family engagement activity, they are then given an additional opportunity to visit the store during that same month. The creation and stocking of the store have been made possible through donations from Standard Properties, GiveNKind, Family Connects and Share Our Spare.

WHAT'S THE WORD NEWSLETTER

As a means of further engaging our families and keeping them looped in with the happenings at the school, Educare created a bi-monthly, center-wide collaborative newsletter for families called, "What's The Word." Through this newsletter, parents receive information on education updates, classroom studies, new-hires, community resources, health and nutrition recommendations, administration and facility updates, research data and other important information. In the upcoming school year, we will work on creating an electronic version of the newsletter so parents can access the content on their phones, tablets or home computers.

EARLY LITERACY EFFORTS

Educare partnered with our onsite library consultant on a new program that allows the checking out of bags of books, versus one book at a time for our families. Through this program, our goal was increasing home libraries as well as the reading time parents conduct at home. We are planning on continuing this program due to the success we saw from last year's strategy.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT PROCESS

FSS will continue encouraging parental participation in the Family Partnership Agreement (FPA) process. As it currently stands, the FPA provides necessary resources identified through the planning and goal creation stages of the process. As a means of enhancing the FPA, we also are conducting ongoing analysis of the process, where we are identifying enhancement opportunities regarding our services and community outreach efforts, with the aim of helping even more families achieve their personal goals.

PARENT CAFES

This year, we continued offering Parent Cafés. We held one training, where one more parent was trained on facilitating Parent Cafés, then held four Parent Café sessions virtually, where 19 parents participated in conversations. The sessions covered the topics of Managing Family Emotions and Stress as well as Zero to Five Schooling During a Pandemic.

ANNUAL PARENT APPRECIATION EVENT

Each year, Educare hosts a parent appreciation event thanking parents for their dedication to their child's education and for persevering in the midst of their challenges and barriers. As a part of the event, FSS creates certificates for our parents championing their accomplishments over the last year and cheering them on to the next challenge. Parents receive small tokens of appreciation and a light breakfast or snack. As we've seen over the years, many parents are overcome with emotion because they are being recognized for the good, hard work they are doing.

Parenting Curriculum

Educare Chicago will continue to use Parents as Teachers (PAT) as our parenting curriculum going into the 2022-2023 school year. In 2021-2022, 57 families participated in 147 cumulative PAT experiences. Outside of our general PAT activities, Parents are also given additional PAT activities based on an expressed need or concern they have shared with FSS.

As an enhanced effort, this previous year Educare's EHS, HS and FSS teams partnered on creating a monthly activity, recorded each activity, and posted them on Classdojo as resources for families so that they could participate in positive parent-child interactions at home. We will continue this process until families are able to resume in-person participation at our center. In the new school year, we are planning on adding PAT activities to the three planned Classroom Parent Meetings.

PARENT UNIVERSITY/PARENT TRAININGS

- COVID-19 & Trauma
- Financial Literacy/Wellness
- Disabilities/Conscious Discipline
- Vision Board/Goal Setting
- Summertime Fun Activities/Visiting the Educare Garden

MALE INVOLVEMENT VIRTUAL BREAKFAST CLUB

- Goodwill/Employment Services
- How's Your Finances?
- Healthy Living
- Co-Parenting
- Your Role as a Father

PARENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- August 2021 (Parent Orientation)
- September 2021 (make-up Parent Orientation)
- October 2021
- November 2021
- December 2021
- January 2022
- February 2022
- March 2022
- April 2022
- June 2022

COOKING MATTERS

- Parents learned how to prepare nutritious meals. Classes led by dietician, Comp Services and FSS. 6-week workshop

PARENT CAFÉ TRAINING: September 2021

- Parents were trained to facilitate Parent Cafés utilizing the Strengthening Families model.

PARENT CAFÉ DISCUSSIONS: Managing Family Emotions and Stress and Zero to Five Schooling in a Pandemic.

Parent lead discussions:

- 2 sessions in October 2021
- 1 session in November 2021
- 1 session in December 2021

GOCPS PRESENTATION: November 2021

- FSS and a community representative presented information on how to navigate the enrollment process for Chicago Public Schools (CPS), assisted parents in choosing the best school for their child, and reviewed school report cards with parents.

CHARTER SCHOOL EVENT: February 2022

- Chicago charter schools attended this virtual event to share enrollment information with Educare parents whose children are headed to kindergarten. School representatives answered questions parents had regarding their school as a means of preparing parents for deciding on what school they should choose for their child.

PARENT APPRECIATION EVENT: July 2022

- FSS staff organized this annual event to thank parents for their dedication to their children’s education and to Educare. Parents received certificates for their accomplishments from this school year, light refreshments and a small gift.

Child Outcomes

SUMMARY

For the most part, the numbers are as expected for the Spring Educare Chicago Checkpoint. Most children who scored meeting or exceeding in multiple areas are children who have consistent attendance, children who enrolled and started at or near our initial start date in September, and classrooms that had consistent teaching teams that may have not been greatly impacted by attendance issues.

At least 89% of all children met or exceeded expectations in all areas during the spring checkpoint. The area of greatest strength was *Physical*, where 96% of children met or exceeded expectations. *Literacy* was also a strength in the spring. The areas of *Physical* (96%) and *Cognitive* (84%) had the highest rate for African American males and children with specialized plans.

Literacy (91%) and *Physical* (96%) had the highest number of children meeting and exceeding expectations overall. *Physical* (98%), in addition to *Literacy*, *Social Emotional* and *Cognitive* (92%), had the highest percentages of meeting and exceeding for EHS. In HS classrooms, *Physical* (94%) and *Language* (92%) had the highest percentage of meeting and exceeding overall.

The most challenging area this season appears to still be *Mathematics*, where we have 15% of our children that fell below expectations. This number has improved from Winter 2021, when the percentage below was at 33%. With 53% in fall of 2021 and later 33% in winter of 2022, the percentage has steadily increased. This seems to be a trend and we have seen this for the last couple of years. Therefore, there has been much improvement from the winter and spring. Our improvement can be attributed to education coordinators completing observations due to teacher shortages. We also started our STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Art Mathematics) focused professional learning community with our teaching team. Our Age Level meetings offer teacher peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Additionally, our lead teacher mentor coaches have assisted our teaching teams and helped improve their understanding of developmentally appropriate math learning opportunities.

Our data also suggested progress toward our school readiness goals. We will continue working on improving our understanding of *Mathematics*, *Literacy* and *Language*. Overall, children sustained or made increases in all areas. The staff was intentional in their planning efforts. Education managers and lead teacher mentor coaches offered bi-monthly age-level meetings that assisted with planning and gave teachers a chance to talk to their peers about their classroom experiences.

Services for Children with Special Needs

SUMMARY

Effective teaching requires individualization for each student to develop and reach both their developmental and social-emotional milestones. We take this approach because individualizing for children who need more support helps ensure effective teaching for children with disabilities. Using children’s Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals is part of effective teaching, individualizing, and creating inclusive environments to support children’s positive outcomes.

Per Head Start Standard 1302.14 (b), a program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment children are eligible for services under IDEA. After a student scores a referral on the screening assessment, the internal staffing/interim plans are enacted in a timely manner. Once the student is deemed eligible for either an IFSP or IEP implementation plan, a meeting is scheduled with teaching staff to create goals and individualize each student’s education plan, while our mental health consultants meet with teaching staff regularly regarding any concerns they may have.

In the 2021-2022 school year, Educare held many training courses to ensure children who were diagnosed with medical, or nutrition needs had the proper care. Teachers were provided training on G-tube, asthma, CPR, seizures, and epi-pen protocols, preparing our team for the year ahead. Overall, we exceeded the HS requirement by 22% with disabilities both in EHS and HS.

Some challenges we encountered in the 2021-2022 school year involved the lack of consistent and timely follow up and follow through from CPS and Early Intervention in the referral process. This caused delays for children going through the referral process and furthered delayed children receiving eligible services.

Health Services

Percent of Children Meeting Health Requirements 2021 -2022

	Health Insurance	Medical Home	Dental Home	Professional Dental Exam	Current EPSDT	Up to date Immunizations
Center-based Program	HS-99% EHS- 98%	HS-99% EHS- 97%	HS-97% EHS-90%	HS-86% EHS-58%	HS- 84% EHS-58%	HS-93% EHS-86%
Home-based Program	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Family Child Care	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Mental Health Services

SUMMARY

Educare supports the mental health of children, families and staff every day. We center mental health in our practice by helping children develop the ability to express and regulate emotions, form trusting relationships, explore and learn—all in the cultural context of family and community. The mental health of children and our families is essential for school readiness.

As a part of our routine practice, mental health and developmental consultants collaborate with teaching staff and parents on creating implementation plans that support the IFSP or IEP goals within the classroom. The inclusion aides help support children by facilitating transitions within and outside of the classroom, assisting with transportation issues, and providing other support based on the child’s needs outlined in the interim/implementation plan.

During the 2021-2022 school year, we had several children with autism and were able to tap into our team members strengths to help support and empower each child accordingly. For example, we realized one of our inclusion aides specialized in music therapy. With this knowledge, we incorporated music into our programmatic work to help meet some of the children’s social-emotional needs. Staff also worked with parents and therapists to acquire helpful materials for individual children such as weighted vests, oral motor items and/or feeding tools.

Our Community

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- In the past year, the needs of children and families have changed dramatically because of the continued national health pandemic, general social unrest, and the level of crime in Chicago.
- 48% of the families served by Educare are essential workers. Many of them struggled to maintain employment with grave concerns about infecting their children and other loved ones due to working in a pandemic.
- 67.42% of our families recently reported being employed. 28% of these families were only working part time while 33% reported being unemployed.

Shared Governance

Start Early has a formal structure of shared governance through which parents can participate in policy-making and other decisions about the program. Start Early implements the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework to promote parent and family engagement and children's learning and development. Participation in policy groups, parent committees, and governing bodies empowers parents and community members to share in the decision-making process.

The Board of Directors (BOD) is comprised of dedicated volunteers that represent various sectors of the community. The BOD is legally and fiscally responsible for all activities of the agency, including decisions for the agency policies, approving the annual budget and determining the goals and the direction of the agency and its programs.

The Policy Council (PC) consists of members, that include HS parents and community representatives. The PC, in partnership with the BOD, is the governing body of the HS program. The PC is responsible for the direction of the program, including making decisions about policies, operating procedures, budgets, and proper adherence to program guidelines. Special thank you to our BOD and PC members that have worked tirelessly throughout the program year 2021-2022. Your support is appreciated!

Summary of Audit Findings

Educare's last annual licensing visit by the Illinois Department of Children and Families was in January of 2021. There were no findings from this audit. The next visit has been postponed. The City Health Department conducted the food protection inspection and we passed with no findings. The Fire Marshal, Electrical Inspector, Plumbing Inspector and Heating and Air Conditioning Inspector conducted an audit and passed us with no findings.

There were no findings in our Fiscal Year 2020 financial audit. The audit for Fiscal Year 2021 has been completed.

Summary of Information Required by the Secretary

Start Early Board of Directors and Policy Council received brief summaries and links to all program instructions and informational memorandums.

Summary of Annual Review Findings

FOCUS AREA 1

There was an area of concern during our Focus Area 1 review for the EHS and HS grant under Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services. 1302.91(e)(1)

- 16 of 64 Early Head Start teachers did not have a minimum of a CDA or comparable credentials. However, all 16 had professional development plans with CDA completion dates of one year from hire. The program required the completion of the CDA within the required timeframe for teachers to continue their employment.

FOCUS AREA 2

There was no finding during our Focus Area 2 Federal Review for the Early Head Start program in 2022.